Amtrak is Ready When You Are!!

Has the current gas crunch affected your family’s budget and perhaps your plans for travel by car? Has the high cost of airplane tickets turned your vacation into a stay-cantion? If you answered YES!, then you may be happy to hear that President Bush just signed legislation that will double the federal spending to help improve rail transportation in the United States. The nation’s rail system, AMTRAK, provides passenger rail service to more than 500 destinations in the 46 states.

As the hassles of traveling by train or by car have increased, ridership and ticket revenue for AMTRAK has been growing at a steady pace. One of the strongest AMTRAK lines, form New Orleans through Atlanta, to New York has grown by an astounding 11%.

Unfortunately, throughout the years AMTRAK has experienced budgetary problems. The new financial support form President Bush and Congress hopes to reach $14 billion over five years. This money is intended to help improve AMTRAK service in the way of more passenger trains and new technologies to improve safety in the railroad lines.

Next time you plan a big trip with your family, sit back and let AMTRAK take you there!

Geewax, Marilyn, “With More Funding, Amtrak has Velocity”, Atlanta Journal Constitution, 14 Oct., 2008, A3

Can You Spare a Quarter?

Are you interested in numismatics? Perhaps you don’t know this, numismatics is the interest in and study of coins! And over the past 10 years coin collectors have been participating in a very popular program sponsored by the U.S. Mint – the state quarters commemorative series. While not rare, about 34 billion of these commemorative state quarters have been produced, or minted, by the United States Mint. Each state quarter has the state’s nickname on it, along with other state history and trivia – including state flowers, state birds, flags, and famous people.

Over 147 million collectors in the United States have been purchasing and collecting these quarters, and the Mint has made $3.5 billion in profit form their sale. The Mint issued the quarters in the order each state joined the Union (Georgia, as we all know, was the 4th of 13 original colonies).

After Hawaii hits the rounds in November, that will be it for the 50 state quarters. But don’t despair, numismatic fiends – there will still be quarters issued form the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Nother Mariana Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

What a rich world we live in!

Italie, Leanne, “10 Years of Quarters,” Atlanta Journal Constitution. 14 Oct. 2008. A3